



# AGENDA REPORT


**TO:** Jestin D. Johnson  
City Administrator

**FROM:** Ashleigh Kanat  
Director, Economic and  
Workforce Development  
Department

**SUBJECT:** Fiscal Year 2025-2027 Public Art  
Projects Plan and 2023-2024  
Activities Report

**DATE:** May 13, 2025

City Administrator Approval

  
Jestin Johnson (May 1, 2025 19:45 PDT)

Date: **May 1, 2025**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff Recommends That The City Council Approve A Resolution Adopting The Fiscal Year 2025-2027 Public Art Projects Plan And The 2023-2025 Public Art Activities Report.**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The proposed resolution would adopt the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025-2027 Public Art Projects Plan and 2023-2024 Activities Report as described in **Attachment A**.

In accordance with the City of Oakland's Public Art Ordinance (No. 13562 C.M.S.), the Cultural Affairs Division ("CAD"), in consultation with the Mayor-appointed, Council-confirmed Public Art Advisory Committee ("PAAC"), developed and is now submitting a Public Art Projects Plan ("Plan") for the approval of the City Council, to authorize staff to continue administration of prior-year projects and commence new projects for public art in the City of Oakland.

This Plan includes Capital Improvement Program ("CIP") funded projects and planning for public art administrative and maintenance needs, including the development of a citywide Public Art Long-Range Strategic Plan as well as a complementary Civic Art Collection assessment, maintenance and conservation plan, utilizing *restricted* but undesignated funds from the Public Art Project Account (5505) as described in **Attachment A**.

Additionally, the Cultural Affairs Division, with the recommendation of the PAAC, requests that the City Council receive a report on recent program activities that inform the Plan.

## **BACKGROUND / LEGISLATIVE HISTORY**

Oakland's Public Art Ordinance (No. 11086 C.M.S.) was adopted in 1989 and amended in 2019 ([No. 13562 C.M.S.](#)). The Ordinance established the Public Art Program, the Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC), and requirements for adoption of a Public Art Projects Plan to inform the work of the Program. The Plan consists of a prioritized list of visual arts projects, community investments, and public art related initiatives supporting the Civic Art Collection to be undertaken in any given year, including budgets and recommended site and design approaches, when applicable.

### **Program Overview**

#### ***Public Art Project Commissions, Artist Recruitment and Selection Panel Process***

The Plan, informed by the CIP and the [2018 Oakland Cultural Plan](#) to invest in and uplift Oakland's vibrant cultural communities, is developed by Public Art staff in cooperation with financial and capital project management staff of the City's Public Works - Project Delivery Division, and Department of Transportation – Planning and Project Delivery, to implement public art commissions throughout Oakland in conjunction with Council approved capital projects. The Plan includes many projects already in progress as well as projects commencing in 2026.

#### **Capital Improvement Projects:**

To develop the plan, the Public Art staff reviews active and future City of Oakland capital improvement projects and identifies any new sources for public art funding. Working with project management staff from other City departments, Public Art staff evaluate the appropriateness of implementing public art projects at the sites of capital improvements and consults with members of the PAAC to prioritize and recommend sites for the development of new public art projects, as well as other public art and civic art collection needs. Sites and scopes of work for new projects are reviewed at monthly public meetings of the PAAC, and through ad-hoc advisory groups of citizen stakeholders in the respective communities. The Plan is then presented to the PAAC for review and approval before being presented to City Council for adoption.

As each project is initiated, artists working in relevant media are identified for the project opportunity and selected through competitive processes by dedicated artist selection panels comprised of community project stakeholders for each commission. Selection panels review artists' credentials, interview artists, and make recommendations to the PAAC prior to award of artwork design, fabrication, and installation contracts.

#### **Public Art for Private Development Projects:**

Public Art staff facilitate and provide guidance on program outreach, artist recruitment, and community engagement opportunities, and ensure compliance with the Public Art for Private Development Oakland Municipal Code ([OMC Chapter 15.78](#)) Requirements for new development. Artists approved for the Pre-Qualified Roster may be referred for these opportunities to support local cultural investment, professional, and economic development.

#### **Artist and Community Initiated Projects:**

Public Art staff and the PAAC facilitate and support artist and community-initiated projects, through introductory orientation, review, and approval of public art projects funded by the City and/or proposed for City property at their monthly meetings held in City Hall. The program is

managed by the Cultural Affairs staff within the Economic & Workforce Development Department (EWDD). To ensure transparency and public trust in the distribution of public funds for the arts in Oakland, the program has established policies, review procedures, and a panel system for awarding commissions. The Oakland Cultural Plan further identified specific goals to enhance intentional, equitable artist recruitment and access to Oakland public art opportunities, as described below and in the Plan **Attachment A**.

## **ANALYSIS AND POLICY ALTERNATIVES**

The FY 2025-2027 Public Art Projects Plan will support civic engagement and the creative involvement of Oakland's diverse communities in the commissioning process, from the development of art opportunities and the artist selection process to the refinement of project proposals and, in some instances, through hands-on community engagement in artmaking. The Plan builds on and expands the work accomplished over the last two years.

Approval of this plan will advance the Citywide priorities of holistic community safety; housing, economic and cultural security; and vibrant, sustainable infrastructure. These priorities are advanced through workforce investment in the commissioning of artists and local arts professionals and craftspeople to create permanent, integrated public art projects which celebrate Oakland's diverse cultural communities. Permanent public art projects and maintenance of those works in public facilities and public open spaces further conveys public safety and dedicated investment in community-grounded assets through sustainable neighborhood beautification.

### **2023-2024 Program Activities**

#### ***Artist Recruitment, Professional Development, and Public Art Workshops***

A policy of the Public Art Program is to award a majority of Oakland public art commissions to Oakland-based artists. In addition to direct financial opportunities, staff proactively provides technical assistance and career development tools to Oakland-based artists. In 2023, Public Art staff collaborated with Oakland Cultural Strategist in Government for Public Art Sorell Raino-Tsui / ABG Art Group to offer a robust series of professional development workshops for local and emerging artists interested in competing for upcoming public art opportunities, within the public and private sectors. The workshops engaged 147 Oakland and Bay Area artists to build trust and hands-on experience in project proposal development. The 78 artists who completed the course were guaranteed inclusion in a pre-qualified artist roster and developed the professional skills needed to compete for other public art opportunities in Oakland and elsewhere. The workshops were further documented with videos, workshop handouts, and site visits to local fabricators studios. [Workshop resources](#) are maintained and made available to artists on the city website.

In the summer of 2024, the Division issued a call for artists for inclusion in the Oakland Pre-Qualified Public Artist Roster for upcoming City of Oakland commissions. A selection panel of Oakland-based community panelists with public art experience reviewed the 418 applications and ultimately recommended 260 artists for the roster.

Applicants for the Pre-Qualified Roster were reviewed and recommended for inclusion in the roster based on public art selection criteria included in the original Request for Qualifications (RFQ). The selection panel recommendations were forwarded to the PAAC for review and approval on September 30, 2024. The [Pre-Qualified Artist Roster](#) of recommended artists is now posted on the City website, and program staff utilize this database for upcoming projects.

## **Fiscal Year 2025-2027 Public Art Projects Plan**

### ***Focus on Capital Improvement Program Commissions and Maintenance***

In alignment with the City's goal of supporting and uplifting Oakland's neighborhoods and public spaces, the FY 2025-2027 Public Art Projects Plan includes projects identified through the Capital Improvement Program to be initiated at various recreation centers including Mosswood Community Center, DeFremery Park, Lincoln Recreation Center and Estuary Park; and for streetscape project pedestrian improvements on 14<sup>th</sup> Street, and in West and East Oakland. The total estimated budget for these active projects in FY 2025-2027 period is \$2,185,000 and supported by multiple Capital Funds that do not require additional appropriations, as described in the Plan Attachment A. Monies proposed to be allocated from the Public Arts Fund will be used to initiate a Civic Art Collection assessment of these city assets, and for planning to inform future project investments in underserved communities across the City.

### **Scheduling and Project Coordination Impacts**

If no action is taken and the Public Art Projects Plan is not adopted, ongoing and upcoming projects may be impacted by scheduling and project delays. In the short term, the opportunity to integrate public artwork with active CIP projects and to leverage construction line-items through the public art budget will be lost, resulting in projects that may be poorly integrated and more costly to execute. In the long term, inactivity in the public art program constitutes a cultural loss to the City of Oakland residents and visitors collectively, and individually to communities throughout the City. Many Oakland artists, local fabricators, and specialty contractors will be impacted by the loss of potential income.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

Acceptance and approval of this proposed report does not have a direct fiscal impact or cost to the General Fund. Public art projects are funded through Oakland's Percent for Art Ordinance No. 13562 C.M.S., which authorizes the allocation of 1.5% of CIP costs for the commissioning of public artwork, and the Public Art for Private Development Ordinance No. [13491 C.M.S.](#), which allows for in lieu contributions to the Public Arts Fund (5505). The total estimated budget for public art projects active in the FY 2025-2027 period is \$2,185,000. Funding is available for these public art projects in multiple Capital Funds that do not require additional appropriations. A one-time additional funding appropriation request of \$400,000 in the Municipal Capital Improvements: Public Arts Fund (5505), Public Art Organization (85521), Public Art Plan & Management Project (1008022) is included in the FY 2025/27 Economic and Workforce Development Departmental Biennial Budget Proposal. The total budget to implement the Plan as described in **Attachment A** is \$2,585,000.

**Project budgets are listed for reference only.** Project details are included in the FY 2025-27 Public Art Projects Plan **Attachment A**. CIP Projects are delivered over two to five years. Funds are approved for related projects as part of the City's CIP Program. See **Table 1** below.

**Table 1. Capital Improvement Program (CIP) - Permanent Public Art Commissions**

	Public Art Project Fund Source	Start Date	District	Art Budget \$*
1.	Mosswood Community Center	2025	D3	235,000
2.	DeFremery Park (D3) 2025	2025	D3	155,000
3.	14th Street Safety Project (D3) 2025	2025	D3	235,000
4.	Estuary Park	2025/26	D2	200,000
5.	Lincoln Recreation Center - Phase 1	2025/26	D2	260,000
6.	7 <sup>th</sup> Street Connector Project Phase 1- Planning	2025/26	D3	250,000
7.	Tyrone Carney Park Memorial- Funded separately through Public Works	2025	D7	N/A
8.	Bancroft Avenue Greenway Phase 1- Planning	2025/26	D6/D7	300,000
9.	Embarcadero West Rail Safety & Access	2026/27	D3	300,000
10.	Fire Station 29 / Training Center, Phase 2	2026/27	D6	250,000
	<b>Total - CIP Program</b>	<b>2025/27</b>		<b>\$2,185,000</b>

\*All art budget estimates represent total budget excluding administrative costs and may be allocated over multiple years. Public art projects are funded through Oakland's Percent for Art Ordinance No. 13562 C.M.S., which authorizes the allocation of 1.5% of CIP costs for the commissioning of public artwork.

**Table 2. Proposed Allocation of Fund 5505 Balance Appropriation Request**

\*Funding request is included in the Fiscal Year 2025-2027 departmental budget proposal.

<b>I. General Contractor Installation Assistance Costs</b>	100,000
• Installation and engineering by CA state licensed contractors for public improvements	
<b>II. Collections Management and Maintenance</b>	200,000
• Collections documentation, conservation assessments and maintenance	
<b>III. Public Art Citywide Master Plan</b>	100,000
• To align with Citywide General Plan and Area Plans	
<b>Total Fund 5505 Appropriation</b>	<b>\$ 400,000</b>

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH / INTEREST**

Capital Improvement funded projects are identified through the [Capital Improvement Program](#) as adopted by the City Council. Artists were invited to be considered for these upcoming opportunities by application to the Oakland Public Artist Pre-Qualified Roster.

The Oakland Public Art Pre-Qualified Roster Call for Artists for these upcoming projects was announced on July 3, 2024, and open for eight weeks. The artist call was designed for ease of application and to reduce barriers to first time Oakland applicants. The call was announced via the Cultural Affairs Division newsletter, local and regional artist opportunities websites, and the California Arts Council opportunities newsletter. Outreach for this call included posting on the City's website and social media sites, including the [Cultural Affairs Division Instagram Page](#) and [Cultural Affairs Division Facebook Page](#), as well as direct artist recruitment within the local artist community through channels developed during the Cultural Strategist in Government for Public Art workshops. In total, staff estimates that it was able to outreach to over 1,000 artists, organizations, and community groups. PAP staff also conducted public workshops and one-on-one technical assistance meetings for prospective applicants. Over 30 people attended the public workshops via Zoom, and dozens of prospective applicants received one-on-one technical assistance from staff. The roster will be updated approximately every two years to include new artists interested in being considered for future commissions.

The FY 2025-2027 Public Art Projects Plan was presented for public comment and Committee review at two PAAC meetings, on July 1, 2024, and March 3, 2025. The PAAC unanimously approved and recommended forwarding of the Plan to City Council.

## **COORDINATION**

The City Attorney's Office, the Budget Bureau, and Capital Improvement Program staff in Public Works and the Department of Transportation have been consulted in the preparation of this report and resolution.

## **SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES**

As each project is initiated, Public Art Program staff will work with the appropriate City departments regarding sustainable opportunities. Generally, however, this Plan addresses sustainable opportunities as follows:

***Economic:*** Public art activities and commissions provide economic opportunities directly and indirectly to Oakland-based artists, architects, craftspeople, fabricators, installers, and other public art-related professionals. Additionally, public art bolsters the cultural and civic identity of Oakland, fortifying the City and its neighborhoods as destinations, enhancing, enriching, and enlivening the visual environment and creating positive publicity resulting in economic benefit.

**Environmental:** Whenever possible, public art projects are designed to be compatible with and integrated into the environment and architecture of their surroundings using sustainable materials. Artists commissioned through the Public Art Program are required to work closely with the project designers and architects, if applicable, and with City staff to develop projects using low-maintenance materials that align with the City's capital improvement sustainability and climate action policies. Artwork projects proposed in this plan will measurably enhance multiple City parks, pedestrian passageways and other public spaces.

**Race & Equity:** The Public Art Program offers an open, competitive process for public artists for CIP projects, resulting in awards to artists that represent all seven City Council Districts. Revisions to the Roster application process were designed to reduce barriers for emerging and historically under-resourced artists. The City Council-approved CIP process identifies project locations that consider zip codes which rank high in Oakland's community stressors index, and which result in project commissions for these priority zip codes as funds become available. American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation is available for deaf and hard of hearing applicants, language translation services are provided through the City's Equal Access Program when requested, and staff performs outreach in communities with significant Asian-American, Pacific Islander, African American, Latinx, and immigrant populations. Racial equity goals are advanced through outreach activities that include application workshops, one-on-one technical assistance that targets under-represented communities, and the recruitment of program and project selection panelists that represent Oakland's diverse communities. The PAP provides support to artists that live and work in low-income, culturally specific, Lesbian/ Gay/ Bisexual/ Transgender/ Queer (LGBTQ), youth, disabled, and senior communities.

### **ACTION REQUESTED OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

Staff and the Public Art Advisory Committee Recommend That The City Council Adopt A Resolution Approving The Fiscal Year 2025-2027 Public Art Plan and Accepting the 2023-2024 Public Art Activities Report.

For questions regarding this report, please contact Kristen Zarembo, Public Art Coordinator, at [kzarembo@oaklandca.gov](mailto:kzarembo@oaklandca.gov).

Respectfully submitted,



[Ashleigh Kanat \(Apr 30, 2025 12:40 PDT\)](#)

ASHLEIGH KANAT

Director,

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Reviewed by:

Lex Leifheit, Interim Cultural Affairs Manager

Life Enrichment Committee  
May 13, 2025

Jestin D. Johnson, City Administrator

Subject: Fiscal Years 2025-2027 Public Art Plan and 2023-2024 Public Art Activities Report

Date: May 13, 2025

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Economic & Workforce Development

Prepared by:

Kristen Zaremba, Public Art Coordinator

Economic & Workforce Development

Attachments (1):

A: Fiscal Year 2025-2027 Public Art Plan and 2023-2024 Activities Report